

FAMILY SMOKING PREVENTION
AND TOBACCO CONTROL ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, June 12, 2009

Ms. McCOLLUM. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (H.R. 1256). Today is a historic day for the prevention of disease and promotion of public health in America. I commend Chairman WAXMAN, Chairman DINGELL, and Chairman PALLONE for their leadership in advancing this legislation.

Tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death in the United States. More than 400,000 people die in the U. S. each

year from tobacco use, including 5,600 Minnesotans. Another 8.6 million Americans are living with a serious illness caused by smoking. Unfortunately, the problem continues to grow. Every day, more than 3,500 young Americans try a cigarette for the first time. One third of these individuals will eventually die prematurely as a result of long-term tobacco use. Even those who do not choose to smoke tobacco are put in harms way—for every eight smokers who die from using tobacco, one non-smoker also loses their life.

The Food and Drug Administration, FDA, is charged with ensuring the safety of food and medicine sold in the United States, but lacks the authority to regulate one of the deadliest products in America—tobacco. This is a loophole American families cannot afford.

The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, of which I am an original

cosponsor, would grant the FDA the authority to regulate the advertising, marketing, and manufacturing of tobacco products, particularly for young people. By prohibiting the colorful marketing of tobacco products to children, we can help prevent countless young Americans from becoming victims of deceptive advertising. This bill will also allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services to approve all label statements and to restrict the sale, promotion, and distribution of tobacco products for the protection of public health. This legislation will also accomplish all of these important goals in a fiscally responsible manner—funding for FDA tobacco activity will be provided through a user fee on tobacco manufacturers.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill to pass this bill and send it to the President to be signed into law. This is an important step to moving towards a healthier America.